

Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health

OF THE

Urban District of Farnham for 1895.

I beg to report that during 1895 the total number of cases of Zymotic disease notified to me was 32 as against 34 during the previous year, and that out of that 32 only 2 died, so that if it had not been for a very wide-spread epidemic of Influenza in March which caused 8 deaths, our death rate from Zymotic disease would have been very low, instead of slightly higher than last year as it will be seen to be by reference to the table at the end of this report. The 32 cases are made up as follows: Scarlatina 4, Diphtheria 8, Typhoid Fever 7, Continued Fever 3, Erysipelas 10. There was nothing like an epidemic of any one of these. The table immediately following will show that the cases were scattered about over the whole year.

	Scarlatina.	Diphtheria.	Typhoid Fever.	Continued Fever.	Erysipelas.
January	1	3
February	1
March
April	2	1	..	1
May	2	..	2
June	1	1	..	..
July	2	..	..
August	1	..	1	..
September	1	..	..	..
October	1	1
November	2	1	..	..	..
December	2	2	1	..	2

Scarlatina. The 4 cases were not connected together by traceable infection, except in the case of two brothers (Nash), one of whom had notified to me by the doctor in attendance: on making further enquiries at my first visit, and examining several others of the family, I found that a younger brother was desquamating, and therefore very infectious: the mother had noticed this child being unwell, but was very loth to believe that he had had Scarlatina. This is another of those dangerous cases in which the original illness was so slight as to pass unnoticed by the parents, and so the child, highly infectious, was running about as usual under no restrictions (it may be within the remembrance of the Council that both in 1894 and 1893 I reported similar cases, where by careful inspection I had discovered children desquamating, and yet allowed to go to school as usual). Of the four present cases, one was isolated at home with a nurse, and safely, *i.e.*, without spreading to anyone else in the house; and three were removed to the Infectious Wards at the Union.

Diphtheria.—No two of these cases were connected together by infection that was traceable. The case of Butler, of Sandpit Cottage, Guildford Road, was probably caught from a little girl who was nursing the child. A police-constable's child having Diphtheria led me to examine the drainage at the Police Station, I reported that the ventilation of the sewers was not good, and the County Architect, with the Medical Officer of Health for Surrey, came down and examined the whole system, and as a result some slight alterations were made in the ventilating arrangements: I have not heard any complaints since. A post office clerk living in Park Row had a slight attack: the sanitary conditions at her home were not very good and I believe have not been improved. At the Post Office the scheme for increasing the closet accommodation, &c., has been carried out in a very satisfactory manner. In the cases of Gibbons, Mount Pleasant, and Clarke, Waverley Estate, the sanitary arrangements were very imperfect, but have both since been remedied; of these cases five were treated at their own homes, without spreading, and with one death; three were removed to the Infectious Wards, and of these one died.

Typhoid Fever.—Six out of the seven cases occurred in the four months, April to July, but not together, and I do not think there was any connection between any of them. In the cases of Grover, St. James' Avenue, and Ralph (a servant at Mr. Clarke's, Hale Road) the drinking water was from wells, and the drainage for one reason or another unsatisfactory, but no alteration was made after my reports in May and June respectively. In the cases of McConnochie, Waverley Estate, and Clifton, "Bush" Tap, defects were found which have since been remedied, but in these and the three remaining cases the drinking water was from the town supply. Of these five cases were treated at home, and two removed to the Infectious Wards; no death occurred.

Continued Fever.—Of the three premises in which these occurred one was well drained, but the other two were bad (Bartlett, in Church Lane, and Young, Downing Street, at the back of the "Alliance"). This latter was especially bad, but I believe the matter is being taken in hand, and that it will be remedied.

Erysipelas.—In all the eight cases there was fault to be found with the premises, some of course much more serious than others, the worst being Curtis, 3 Boro'. Here I found an instance of that most dangerous condition, namely, a soil pipe coming down from an upstairs w.c. inside the wall of the house, so that in the event of any leak occurring in the pipe (which had happened in this pipe), the sewer gas escapes direct into the house. I hope the Council will always insist on soil pipes being removed outside the outside wall of the house in all cases where it is possible. These cases were all treated at home and with no death.

Influenza was very prevalent in March and part of April, and as many as eight deaths were attributed to it in March. There have been no other deaths from it during the rest of the year, though there have been occasional cases all through the time.

Water Supply.—Of all these premises I found in 15 cases that there was no water laid on to the closets for flushing purposes, and I am glad to find that all those reported, during the later months of the year, the Council have insisted on the water being laid on. I cannot imagine a practice more dangerous to health than that of allowing closets to be connected with the main drainage system without proper flushing arrangements; some progress therefore has been made towards the better supply of water and the consequent cleanliness of the Town by this action, and I am in hopes that each year more closets will be supplied with water.

Need of Infectious Hospital.—Though there has been nothing in the shape of an epidemic 8 cases were removed from their homes for treatment in the Infectious Wards of the Union. In all these cases there would have been considerable difficulty in treating them at home without risk of spreading the disease to other members of the household. It will be evident that where infectious cases occur in the families of those conducting small businesses, or public houses, how unsafe it must be for the public to allow the ordinary business to be carried on, and yet these people are not paupers, and from the precedent of Mrs. Lovelock whom it was wished to remove from her home, and who was refused because she was not a pauper, I imagine it will not be possible to remove such persons in future. This will be productive to the unfortunate shopkeeper, as in the case alluded to, where special arrangements had to be made to keep the milk and milk cans entirely out of the house and to hire fresh people to cleanse the cans and see after the milk distribution. I think I have said enough to show the need which exists for the Infectious Hospital that I have so often before urged the Council to provide.

Houses unfit for human habitation.—I have inspected during the year three different sets of premises, which I considered unfit for human habitation.

1. A cottage in Lower Church Lane occupied by Mrs. Wilkins.
2. Several houses in Factory Yard which were in very bad condition and very badly arranged. These are now empty and about to be reconstructed.
3. A cottage at Snailslynch which was very bad, and was described in my report dated 6th Jan., 1896.

Miscellaneous.—In June I was made aware of a very disgraceful state of affairs in a row of 12 houses in Lower Church Lane, where there were only three closets, without water supply; the drains also had very little fall and were completely blocked at time of visit, and there was only pump water for the occupants to drink. The owner has since put them in thorough repair and laid on water to the closets.

A case of Typhoid Fever occurred in a lad attending Guildford Hospital (so it is not included in my list), and I found that his house, 27, Church Lane, was only supplied with an ash closet, and at my visit the pail had a great proportion of sewage matter and very little ashes. These closets are not good when they are near the back door of a house, as in this case, unless they are kept very well supplied with ashes. My attention was

also called to the row of houses known as Castle View, where no water was laid on to the closets and the ventilation was very insufficient; water has, however, now been laid on to the whole row, so I hope this spect will not be as often before me in the future as it has been in the past.

Besides the above premises, most of which I visited in company with the Surveyor, I also visited with him,

1. On March 22nd, Mr. Geo. Newman's, Waverley Estate, where a great nuisance existed due to a leaking soil pipe and inefficient ventilation. This has been remedied except the ventilation.
2. May 30th, 71, East Street, where there was a bad nuisance from a very foul indoor w.c. This has been completely put right.
3. May 30, Nos. 49, 50 and 51, East Street, where the closets were very foul, with no flushing apparatus, and the paving of the yard was very defective. Here the paving has been repaired, but the water was not laid on.

Death Rate.—On the whole the health of the town as shewn by the death rate has not been so good as in 1894, the deaths in February and March, 1895, having been very numerous. The rate for the whole year has been 16·53, as against 14·10 in 1894. Of this increase Zymotic disease accounts for ·14 and the deaths in children under one year account for ·98. This is a very considerable increase and appears to have been partly due to the extreme cold of February. On the other hand the birth rate has been very high. I append a table giving the details, the percentages having been calculated on a population of 5,745 for the Town, and 6,000 for the District, including the Union.

	TOTAL DEATHS.		From Zymotic Disease.		Under 1 Year.		BIRTHS.	
	With Union.	Without Union.	With Union.	Without Union.	With Union.	Without Union.	With Union.	Without Union.
January	14	8	0	0	1	1	13	11
February	23	14	0	0	5	5	17	14
March	26	19	8	8	3	2	12	12
April	8	6	0	0	2	2	15	12
May	14	7	0	0	1	1	18	14
June	8	4	0	0	2	0	18	14
July	9	5	1	0	0	0	36	34
August	5	2	0	0	2	2	14	13
September	14	9	0	0	6	5	15	14
October	12	6	0	0	0	0	16	15
November	8	5	1	0	1	1	13	12
December	10	8	2	2	1	1	11	10
In Guildford Hos.	2	2	..	..	..	..	..	..
TOTAL	153	95	12	10	24	20	198	175
Per 1000 per annum	25·5	16·53	2·00	1·74	4·00	3·48	33·00	30·46
Do. in 1894 ..	25·00	14·10	2·41	1·60	2·75	2·50	23·79	23·76
Do. in 1893 ..	24·90	13·81	3·63	2·00	3·63	2·90	32·18	28·00

S. G. SLOMAN, Jun.,
Medical Officer of Health.

19th February, 1896.

Farnham Rural District Council.

REPORT OF MEDICAL OFFICER FOR 1895.

The area of the Rural District Council is 28,595 acres.

The population is reckoned at 13,411.

The births registered were 475, rate 35·4 per 1,000.

The deaths registered were 243, rate 18·1 per 1,000.

This includes deaths occurring in the Farnham Workhouse, which cases were admitted from the Farnham Rural Sanitary District.

Summary of sickness and mortality during the year from the eight principle Zymotic diseases, and the action taken to prevent their spread:—

Small Pox.

No case reported in the District.

Measles.

Have not been at all prevalent. No deaths have been registered from this disease. No schools have been closed owing to the prevalence of this disease as was the case two years ago.

Whooping Cough.

No deaths registered from this disease. Whooping Cough has not been prevalent in the District.

Typhoid.

Nine cases notified. Six in Farnham, 1 in Ash, 1 in Seale, 1 in Frensham. Two deaths.

Diarrhoea.

Three fatal cases, all under 5 years. One in Farnham, 2 in Ash.

Diphtheria.

Eighteen cases of this disease were notified as occurring in the District, and 5 deaths were registered as occurring from this cause.

Seven in Farnham—Three deaths.

Six in Frensham—One death.

Four in Ash—One death.

One in Seale.

Croup.

No case notified.

Scarlet Fever.

This disease has not been so prevalent as last year, only 12 cases in all have been notified, and no death registered. Three of the cases occurred in Farnham, 4 in Frensham, and 5 in Ash. All these cases were of a mild type.

The total number of fatal cases from these eight diseases has been—

Farnham.....	5
Frensham	2
Ash	3
Seale	0
—	
10	Rate .74 per 1000.

This rate must be considered satisfactory, even compared with that of last year, which was .90 per 1,000.

Diphtheria.

Eighteen cases were notified, as against 13 last year. The cases were distributed throughout the district. Except in one case, where four in one family were attacked at Churt, and as regards two cases which occurred at an interval of more than two months, in the same cottage, at Shortheath, there was no connection or continuity between the cases.

The outbreak at Churt was not attributable to any local cause, but the cottage at Shortheath was in an insanitary condition, and is now undergoing thorough rebuilding and repairs.

Typhoid Fever has been more prevalent than last year, more especially during the closing months of the year. This has been the case generally throughout the county. There has been no connection between the various cases, and one was a distinctly imported case. The mortality is still very low. One interesting point is the absence of any fatal case due to Scarlet Fever, Measles, or Whooping Cough. Measles, which was the cause of 17 deaths in the district two years ago, has not been the cause of a single death. The mortality due to Scarlet Fever is nil, although 12 cases have been notified. The type of this disease which has been prevalent in the district for the last three years is of the very mildest character, in fact no death has occurred from Scarlet Fever during that period.

Remarking generally, then, we may consider the rate of mortality from Zymotic Disease as being very satisfactory, and the percentage per 1,000, .74, is the lowest that has been returned since I have been Medical Officer for the District.

Owing to the absence of any outbreak of these diseases it has not been necessary to take any especial steps such as the closing of schools, but the general sanitary precautions have been carried out on the same lines as in previous years, and premises have been inspected and reported on, after receiving notices under the Act, and proper steps taken in the way of isolation as far as practicable, and subsequent disinfection.

With regard to the general death rate, it will be observed that it is considerably higher than last year, 18.1 per 1,000, as against 13.3 per 1,000. This can be explained by the occurrence of the extreme cold at the commencement of last year, and the subsequent outbreak of Influenza.

Six fatal cases of Influenza were registered, and the disease being frequently complicated with Pneumonia and Bronchitis, caused the number of deaths registered from these causes to be abnormally high. Forty-four deaths have been registered as due to Chest affections, exclusive of Phthisis during the past year.

The morality from Heart Disease is also high, and the severe weather no doubt contributed to this fact. Had it not been for these two causes, extreme cold and Influenza, it is probable that the general death rate would not have been above the average.

PROCEEDINGS UNDER THE SANITARY ACTS.

The question of the Isolation Hospital is still under consideration.

The Blackwater is constantly under the observation of your officers, but I have no knowledge of any pollution of the stream occurring in our District.

Bartram's Mills have been inspected by me without notice, and found in a very satisfactory condition, and I have heard no complaints as to any nuisance caused by them. Under the Housing of the Working Classes Act, several inspections and reports have been made and notices served with uniformly good results, as either the condemned premises have been made habitable or have been shut up.

When nuisances have existed notices have been served in many instances.

I have examined many samples of water, mostly with good results, but when the water has seemed to be of doubtful quality wells have been required to be cleaned out or closed.

I have to acknowledge the assistance rendered to me by our inspector, Mr. Patrick, during the year.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

JOHN A. LORIMER,

Medical Officer of Health Farnham Rural District Council.

